

BLM Seeks Comments on Plan for Overflow Wetlands

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released a management plan for the Overflow Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), to protect its unique biological, scenic and recreational values. The BLM is seeking comments on its action in an accompanying Environmental Assessment. A 45-day public comment period closes on November 14, 2003.

The 7,000-acre Overflow Wetlands ACEC is about 16 miles east of Roswell, south of US Highway 380, adjacent to the Bottomless Lakes State Park. The area supports a significant riparian wetland community and provides important habitat for threatened and endangered fish species. The area encompasses 1,720 acres of State lands, 2,107 acres of private land, and 3,187 acres of public lands. Management actions proposed by the BLM within the ACEC will only apply to public lands.

"The actions we've identified will improve habitat for birds, fish and other species, and enhance opportunities for recreation by the public," said Ed Roberson, Roswell Field Office Manager, "I'd like to thank everyone who provided input the BLM during our planning process."

Projects within the ACEC will include: noxious and invasive weed control where needed, including salt cedar removal; mesquite control on the uplands, limiting the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) to designated roads and trails on the lands within the ACEC; and establishing a trail for wildlife viewing. The BLM will work with the NM Department of game and Fish on a possible designation of waterfowl hunting areas with the ACEC.

BLM also proposes establishing a ¼ -mile trail for the physically impaired; and, in cooperation and consultation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, designating the black-tailed prairie dog colony within the area closed to hunting.

Established by the 1997 Roswell Resource Management Plan (RMP), the goal of managing the Overflow Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is to protect the biological and scenic values of the Overflow Wetlands Wildlife Habitat Area, which provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered fish species and supports a significant riparian/wetland community.

Comments should be addressed to:

Overflow Wetlands ACEC
Roswell Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
2909 West Second Street
Roswell, NM 88201

Additional copies of the Activity Plan and the Environmental Assessment can be obtained at the Roswell Field Office or the documents can be downloaded at the Roswell Field Office web site:

<http://www.nm.blm.gov/www/rfo/index.htm>. Questions about the Activity Plan and the EA should be directed to either Tim Kreager or Howard Parman at the above address or by calling 505-627-0276.

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